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HISTORY OF THE BOOK TRADE IN THE NORTH



Thomas Bewick's Apprentices
ALAN ANGUS

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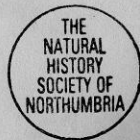
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The illustrations from the workshop records are reproduced with the permission of Mr Bruce Jackson MA DAA, Chief Archivist, Tyne & Wear Archive Service.

THE AUTHOR

Alan S Angus BSc CEng MICE was born at Monkseaton in 1920 and educated at Tynemouth School. He read civil engineering at King's College, Newcastle, now the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. His studies were interrupted by five years of army service, and were completed in 1945. After two years with the Tyne Improvement Commission he joined Charles Brand & Son Ltd, the contractors for the Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels under the Tyne, and thereafter worked on many tunnelling projects in this country and overseas, including the underground section of the Tyne & Wear Metro. After retirement in 1985 he edited the *Journal of the Northumberland & Durham Family History Society* for five years. He is now Hon Treasurer of the Bewick Society.



AS A SMALL BOY in the 1920s I was fascinated by a very lifelike heron which stood in a glass case on the landing of my grandparents' house at Tynemouth. My grandmother told me that it had been stuffed by her grandfather, John Laws of Breckney Hill, who had been a pupil of the famous Thomas Bewick. The name Thomas Bewick meant little to me at the time, and I was more interested in the man who had stuffed the heron.

My interest was rekindled a few years later when as a schoolboy I visited the Hancock Museum in Newcastle and noticed that some of the birds' eggs and nests on display were from the collection of Mr John Laws of Breckney Hill. Much later still, after the death of my grandparents, various items connected with John Laws came into the possession of my father. Among them was an album or scrap-book containing sketches and impressions of heraldic devices, bookplates, letterheads etc which John Laws had presumably collected when he was an apprentice in the Beilby/Bewick workshop, and an account book or ledger in which he had recorded details of his work as a silver engraver from 1794 until 1844. There was also a copy of his obituary taken from the *Newcastle Courant* for 23 August 1844.

By this time I had learnt a good deal about John Laws and his family, but practically nothing about his association with Thomas Bewick. I decided to rectify this by reading everything I could find about Bewick and his apprentices. Unfortunately, although much has been written about Bewick's apprentices, I found no mention of John Laws in any of the books I consulted, and was beginning to feel very frustrated when I chanced upon Bewick's own *Memoir*. Bewick had written

Our first apprentice, was John Laws, who was brought up as a silver engraver & I think he never touched upon the Wood—his turn was directed to the ornamental & chiefly in the branch, of what is called bright engraving & at this kind of work he excelled, & is perhaps the best at this day—with it he also follows the business of a Farmer at 'Heddon Laws', the place of his nativity. We greatly respected him for his honesty, sobriety, civil deportment and attention.

Bewick also describes in his *Memoir* how, after returning from London in 1777, he went into partnership with his former master Ralph Beilby. Beilby had recently started an apprentice, and 'to make us equal' Bewick took on his brother John. This seems to contradict the description of John

Laws as 'our first apprentice', and in order to clarify the situation I obtained permission to examine the Beilby/Bewick workshop records then in the Laing Art Gallery at Newcastle. By studying these records I was able to learn something more, not only about John Laws, but also the other apprentices and their life in the workshop.

1771-1782: The First Apprentices

'During my absence in London, Mr Beilby had taken an Apprentice, with a premium, and to make us equal, I took my brother John as mine...'¹ wrote Thomas Bewick in his *Memoir* when recounting the early days of his partnership with his former master Ralph Beilby. The workshop records make it clear that when Bewick returned Beilby was already employing two apprentices: David Martin, who had started in 1773² when Bewick was still serving his time, and Abraham Hunter, who was bound to 'Ralph Beilby of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Sealcutter' on 3 April 1777 for a period of five years.³ The arrival of John Bewick thus brought the number of apprentices up to three, and their names all appear in the workshop records during the next four or five years. In addition to the apprentices and the two partners there were generally two or three journeymen employed in the Press Room on a piecework basis – the Press Account refers frequently to work done by Tim Wilson, William Orr and 'The Soldier' during this period – so the workshop was quite a busy place.

The work carried out can have changed but little from that described by Bewick when writing of his own apprenticeship

...for such was the industry of my master that he refused nothing, coarse or fine – he undertook every thing & did it in the best way he could – he fitted up & tempered his own tools, which he adapted to every purpose & learned me to do the same – this readiness to undertake, brought him in an overflow of work & our work place was filled, with the coarsest kinds of steel stamps – pipe Moulds – Bottle moulds – Brass Clock faces – Door plates – Coffin plates – Bookbinders Letters & stamps – Steel, Silver & gold Seals – Mourning Rings – Arms crests & cyphers on silver & every kind of job, from the Silver Smiths – writing engraving of Bills, bank notes, Bills of parcels, shop bills & cards – these last, with Gent^s Arms for their Books, he executed as well as most of the Engravers of the time – but what he most excelled in was ornamental Silver engraving: in this, as far as I am able to judge he was one of the first in the Kingdom – & I think upon the whole, he might be called 'an ingenious self taught Artist' ... I think he was the best master in the World

for learning Boys, for he obliged them to put their hands to every variety of Work...⁴

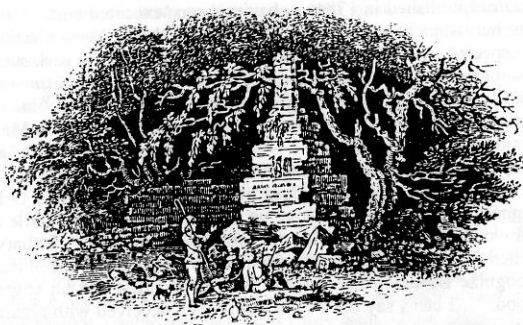
At that time wood engraving formed only a small part of the workshop's output – a letter written by Bewick to Emerson Charnley in 1819 contains the following passage⁵

I therefore date the 'Quadrupeds' to be my commencement of Wood Engraving worthy of attention. Before that period I was engaged in the general work of a Country Engraver's Shop; one hour employed on copper, another on wood, another on silver, another on brass, and another on steel – indeed, ready and willing to undertake any description of work..

The three apprentices would no doubt all be involved in a wide variety of jobs during their stay in the workshop. David Martin, who was probably the 'David Martine', son of David Martine, whose baptism was recorded at Castle Garth Presbyterian Chapel on 29 March 1758, and was thus about 15 years of age when he started his apprenticeship in 1773, seems to have had no particular aptitude for the work. In the letter to Emerson Charnley mentioned above Bewick refers to cuts from *Select Fables* (published in 1784) as having been 'executed partly by my late Brother, when he was an apprentice, and partly by David Martin, whom I respected as a Man, but was obliged from inability to seek some other line of work.' The workshop Cash Books show that Martin was being paid five shillings a week from January 1779 to July 1780,⁶ but unfortunately there is a gap in the records after that date; an entry in May 1781⁷ 'Paid D Martin for gravers — 8/6' may indicate that he left the workshop at this time, but a plate published in the *Newcastle Magazine* for February 1786 illustrating *Cook's Last Voyages* is signed D Martin, suggesting that he did not give up engraving altogether. Little more is known about him, but a letter he wrote to Bewick on 29 January 1777⁸ (when the latter was still in London) shows that he was one of the first to recognize Bewick's exceptional skill as an artist and an engraver on wood: '...I can't say but I have been much deceived with regard to the encouragement they give to wood cutting in London for I tho't as there was not any body there in that way who could do anything worth looking at & yours being so much superior thereto that you would get any price you asked.'

Abraham Hunter was about 17 years of age when he started his apprenticeship in 1777, and the workshop Cash Books show that by 1778 he was being paid five shillings a week for his board. An entry dated 9 July 1778 reads 'Paid Abraham's Board from April 1st to July 10th @ 5/-

per week — £3.10.0⁹, and similar payments continue until July 1780 when the break in the record occurs. Little is known about his work during his apprenticeship, but after serving his time he set up his own business and became sufficiently well established to take on an apprentice — the tax records at the Public Record Office show that John A Kidd was bound to 'Abraham Hunter, Engraver etc' on 20 April 1787 for a period of six years. Hunter is listed under the heading *Engravers and Copperplate Printers* in the Newcastle Trade Directories from 1787 to 1801. He was responsible for some of the plates in *Cook's Voyages Round the World*, published by Matthew Brown, Newcastle, in 1790, and in 1796 he collaborated with Robert Johnson in an engraving of the new Sunderland bridge. He married Sarah Rutherford at Longbenton on 15 November 1788 and died on 28 December 1808 aged 48. The burial of Abraham Hunter, engraver, of Saville Court is recorded in All Saints Parish Register three days later.



Engraving by John Bewick from the title-page of *Poems of Goldsmith and Parnell* (London, 1795)

Recalling the days of his brother's apprenticeship, Bewick wrote in his *Memoir*¹¹

...with my brother I was extremely happy — we lodged together, he arose early in the Morning, lighted our fire — blacked our shoes, dusted the Room, made everything clean for breakfast, as well as any servant Girl could have done & he sewed & mended his own clothes &c and to crown all he was

constantly cheerful, lively & very active, & my friends were his friends — Mr Beilby was also as pleased with him as I could possibly be, for besides his affable temper, he took every kind of work in hand so pleasantly & so very soon learned to execute it well that it could not miss giving satisfaction & this he continued to do as long as he was with us...

John Bewick does not appear to have been paid a regular weekly wage as were David Martin and Abraham Hunter, at any rate during the first two years of his apprenticeship, but in 1779, along with payments to the journeymen Tim Wilson, William Orr and 'The Soldier', the Press Account records payments for 'Work done by John.' Unfortunately no details of the work are given, and the extent of his contribution to works such as *Gay's Fables* (published 1779) and the *Select Fables* (published 1784) has been the subject of much debate. It seems unlikely that he can have played an important part in the production of *Gay's Fables* as he was only in the second year of his apprenticeship when it was published, but Thomas Bewick in the letter previously quoted stated that some of the cuts in the *Select Fables* were by David Martin and some by his brother John when an apprentice.

Towards the end of John's apprenticeship relations between the two brothers became strained because Thomas felt that John was associating with undesirable characters. He goes on to say, however, that as soon as he thought John

might be able to work his way in the world, he having been (I think) about five years with me, I gave him his liberty, and he set off for London, where, from his reformed conduct, & where, from every information I could learn, he was much liked and respected — He was as industrious in London as he had been with us & had plenty of work to do — he was almost entirely employed by the Publishers & Booksellers in London, in designing and cutting an endless variety of blocks for them & as he was extremely quick at his work he did it slightly & at a very low rate for them..¹²

Unfortunately his health declined, and although visits to the family home at Cherryburn brought temporary improvement, he finally had to leave London for good in the early summer of 1795. He died at Cherryburn on 5 December 1795 aged 35, and was buried at Ovingham.

1782–1790: John Laws and the Johnsons

By 1782 both David Martin and Abraham Hunter had completed their apprenticeships, and with the departure of John Bewick for London the partners looked around for replacements. The first to be taken on was John Laws, who was born at Heddon Laws near Heddon-on-the-Wall in

1765 and was thus about 17 years of age when he started his apprenticeship in March 1782. He was joined at the end of the year by John Johnson, the son of John and Isabella Johnson of Rogerly, who was baptized at Stanhope on 25 August 1769, and was therefore probably less than 14. According to Bewick 'John Laws... was brought up as a silver engraver & I think he never touched upon the Wood - his turn was directed to the ornamental & chiefly in the branch, of what is called bright engraving & at this kind of work he excelled, & is perhaps the best at this day',¹³ whereas John Johnson was 'put to do engraving on Wood, as well as other kinds of work - I think he would have shone out in the former branch - but he died of a fever, at about the Age of 22 when only beginning to give great promise of his future excellence'.¹⁴

A year or two after John Johnson started his apprenticeship his more famous cousin Robert also came to work in the workshop. Robert Johnson, whose mother had been for many years a servant in the Bewick household at Cherryburn, was baptized at Ovingham on 9 September 1771, and Bewick relates in his *Memoir* how he was to have been the child's godfather, but at the last moment was overcome by shyness and did not turn up for the ceremony. According to Bewick Robert came to the workshop 'as soon as he attained somewhere about his 13th year', which would be during the summer of 1784. Bewick also says that

he was about a year too young to be bound as an Apprentice, but I took him into my house 'till the proper time arrived, when he was bound to my partner & myself for seven years - He was mostly employed in drawing, & was also at intervals practising himself in the use of the graver & in etching on copper - but being very delicate in his health, we were careful not to confine him too closely at any thing.

Bewick had said earlier that¹⁶

Robert Johnson did not incline to do wood cutting & preferring copper plate engraving he was almost wholly employed in that way & in it attained to great excellence - and besides that, he became great as a draftsman & colourist - but as he was of so delicate a constitution, that he could not bear confinement, we for that reason, set him to work to make sketches and views, where he had both air & exercise.

Bewick's daughter Jane is said to have remarked that Robert Johnson was bound an apprentice on the day her father was married,¹⁷ which was 20 April 1786, and as the apprentices were not normally paid during the first year or two of their apprenticeships there is apparent support for this statement in a Cash Book entry dated 5 May 1787 'Robert Johnson's first wages - 4/6'.¹⁸ However, although an agreement regarding his wages

Contra Cr				
1787	Pro forward	20	10	4
Mar. 18	Colours			3
	Letter 1. Sanders 1 st		1	1
21	Jacks wages 4/6		4	6
	Bennett 16/6 paid him		11	6
23	John Laws first wages		10	-
	Exp on the occasion		6	-
	Letter from Thompson Shield		1	-
	1 st from Rogerly 2 nd from Sunderland		6	-
	1 st from Stille, Shield 10. 6. 6		2	-
28	Sanders 1 st Jack & Robert 9 th		10	-
	John Laws 3 days		9	-
	Bennett's wages 11. 1. 1 st paid him		11	-
	Twine 3 rd Letter from Tho. Wentworth 5 th		8	1/2
	Carriage of French paper. Llanthony		11	1/2
April 4	Sanders 1 st Jack & Robert 4. 6		10	-
	John Laws 1 st Bennett's 2 nd paid him		8	-
	Letter from Thompson Shield 2 nd		2	-
	Flags 7 - Girillies 4 th Letter 6 th		1	5
11	Sanders 1 st Marul to Chesler 2 nd		1	2
	Jack & Robert's wages		9	-
	John Laws 1 st Bennett 8 th 2 nd		10	6
18	Sanders 1 st Jack & Robert 9 th		10	-
	John Laws 2 nd weeks in full		14	6
	Land Tax 4/6 - window & House 2 nd 9/6		14	-
22	Letter from Thompson Sunderland		1	-
	1 st and 2 nd Pines for a handle		3	-
	Letter from Gray Nottingham		6	1/2
	Pro Cps 2 nd Letter from W. Vintall 1 st		2	1
			29	10. 9. 1/2

Page from Cash Book Jan 1787 to Dec 1791 (TWAS 1269/2), showing the first wages of John Laws after completing his apprenticeship

may have been made at this time, the records indicate that Johnson was not formally bound until 23 August 1787, when the Cash Book shows a payment of 12/6 in respect of '2 Indentures — Robert Johnson'.¹⁹ John Johnson (or 'Jack' as he appears in the Cash Book) was also being paid 4/6 per week in 1787, while John Laws was receiving £1.0.0 per month. The employment of Tim Wilson and William Orr in the Press Room terminated about this time ('The Soldier' having disappeared from the wages list some time before), and for the next year or two William Bennett was the journeyman most regularly appearing in the Press Account.

The principal silversmiths in Newcastle at the time were Langlands and Robertson. John Langlands, with John Goodrich as his partner, had taken over the business of their former master Isaac Cookson, who was in turn the successor to Francis Batty; and so, over a period of many years, a tradition of fine craftsmanship had been built up at the sign of *The Gold Ring* which marked their shop in the Side. After the death of Goodrich Langlands had in 1778 taken into partnership John Robertson, a Scot who had previously been in business as a travelling silversmith and jeweller, and who had been largely responsible for persuading Bewick to rejoin his old master Beilby. A considerable amount of silverware manufactured by Langlands and Robertson was sent to the Beilby/Bewick workshop for engraving, and the work done for them was entered in a separate account. An item in this account dated 17 June 1786 is for 'A Tea Pot full grav'd — 1st J Laws — 10/6',²⁰ suggesting that this was the first major piece for which the apprentice was wholly responsible. It was to be the beginning of a lifelong association with the Newcastle silversmiths.

Towards the end of his apprenticeship John Laws evidently considered joining Abraham Hunter in his engraving business. In a letter dated 30 September 1788 John Bewick wrote to his brother²¹

...I am sorry that you shou'd be so beset with your lads and Mr Hunter as it must be particularly disagreeable, but however such matters as may tend to his improvement I shou'd (if that's the case) keep from them — I was informed by Jacob Rile who had been at N.Castle some time ago, that Jno. Laws he believed was going to Hunter as soon as he was at liberty but whether he had it from Jno. or not I cannot say...

What trouble Abraham Hunter was causing is not clear, but in any case John Laws must have had second thoughts. The Cash Book shows that he received his first week's payment as a journeyman on 21 March 1789, when he was paid 18/-, and the additional expenditure of 6/- to mark the

occasion suggests that there were drinks all round!²² He continued to work in the Beilby/Bewick workshop for more than a year; perhaps Bewick persuaded him to stay until work on the *Quadrupeds* was completed, for his eventual departure coincided with its publication. His wages during this period amounted to approximately 18/- per week, although payment was irregular and the amounts varied considerably: on 31 October 1789 he received £15, a large sum for those days. His name appears on the wages list for the last time on 19 June 1790, when he was paid £6.17.0 as 'Ballce. in full to May 22nd.'

After leaving the Beilby/Bewick workshop in 1790 there is no record of John Laws' activities until February 1794, by which time he had returned to the family home and set up in business as a silver engraver on his own account. Although Heddon Laws was still occupied by members of the family, his father had in 1787 taken over the tenancy of the adjoining farm of Breckney Hill, and it was as John Laws of Breckney Hill that he was to become known. A ledger has survived in which he kept details of his accounts with various craftsmen — mostly silversmiths, but including clock and watchmakers, a gunsmith and a saddler — and this shows that he built up an extensive business with the leading Newcastle silversmiths which lasted for 50 years. Probably as a result of his association with Thomas Bewick he was a keen naturalist, and built up a remarkable collection of birds' nests and eggs. In 1801 he made a brief visit to America 'for the purpose' (according to a note in Hodgson's Pedigrees in Newcastle Library) 'of procuring certain birds' eggs'.²⁴ An account in a local newspaper says that he went 'to get a release from the close confinement calculated to impair the eyesight and health', and 'that he purchased and cleared some land'.²⁵ Whatever his motives he did not stay long, for the gap in his accounts only extends from July 1801 to November 1802, and a few months would be spent in the Atlantic crossings. After his return he seems to have settled down again at Breckney Hill and carried on as before. On 19 August 1813 he married Isabella Gilhespy, and over the next nine years they had four sons. His responsibilities as a family man and farmer left less time for silver engraving, and during the later years of his life he only undertook the occasional commission. The last entry in his ledger is in John Walton's account, and is for a silver cream jug which, according to his obituary in the *Newcastle Courant* was 'richly ornamented with four different patterns, which an eminent artist on viewing declared that none in the district could have done it but himself'. The entry is dated 8 June 1844, only a

few weeks before his death on 14 August of the same year at the age of 79. He was buried in the churchyard at Heddon-on-the-Wall.

1790–1794: 'Finis R Johnson'

Before John Laws finally left the Beilby/Bewick workshop he met the young man who was to take his place. Charlton Nesbit, the son of a Swalwell keelman, was baptized at Whickham on 24 September 1775, and was thus about 14 years of age when he started his apprenticeship. Although the Cash Book shows a payment of 13/4 for his indentures on 5 June 1790, it seems that he actually started the previous August. An undated note from Bewick to Beilby, now in the Barnes Collection in Newcastle Library, begins 'The young man is now here – & will after dinner attend at the Press to see John Laws print Brown's Frontispiece...' This probably refers to the copperplate engraving of Captain James Cook's portrait which forms the frontispiece to Cook's *Voyages Round the World*, published by Matthew Brown, Newcastle, in 1790. The note goes on²⁶

'I have not said anything to him about Terms – wou'd like if you wou'd come up to give him a little of your Instructions – I think you can do it better than me – I have calculated as below what I think of proposing to him, viz:
To be bound 7 years & to work piece work the 2 last of that Term –

			£
1st year at 6s. per week			15 – 12
2 Do. at 7 Do.			18 – 4
3 Do. at 8 Do.			20 – 16
4 Do. at 9 Do.			23 – 8
5 Do. at 9 Do.			23 – 8
			101 – 8

This will be a small matter above £20 per year...

Perhaps Beilby considered Bewick's proposed terms too generous, for they were altered considerably. Nesbit was actually paid half-yearly, the payments being due on 22 February and 22 August. They do not appear to have commenced until February 1793, when he was paid £5.4.0 for the half year.²⁷

The two Johnsons were still in the workshop, although John Johnson had completed his apprenticeship and received his first week's pay as a journeyman on 9 January 1790.²⁸ In the Press Room William Bennett (soon to be replaced by John Miller) had been joined by George Barber, who was to remain with Bewick for many years. J Fittler also appears



Tailpiece to *The Deserted Village* engraved by Charlton Nesbit from *Poems of Goldsmith and Parnell* (London, 1795)

regularly in the Weekly Accounts in the period 1790–2. George Barber was said to be related to the Joseph Barber who had a bookshop and circulating library at Amen Corner, at the west end of St Nicholas' churchyard and near the Head of the Side. Up to this time the workshop had been next door to Barber's bookshop, and the move to its better-known position at the southeast corner of the churchyard, as depicted in John Jackson's well-known engraving, took place towards the end of 1790. A Cash Book entry dated 13 August 'Paid Mr N Bayles a deposit for £100 the purchase of his house in St Nichols. Church yard—£5.0.0' is followed on 11 December by payments for 'Policy & Insurance for House & Shop in St Nichols, Ch. Yd.' and to 'Mr Peters for drawing the Conveyance of the house'.²⁹

In April 1791 another apprentice was taken on. This was Henry Barnes, about whom very little is known. Bewick does not mention him in his *Memoir*, and no other writer seems to have noticed him, but an entry in the Cash Book dated 4 April 1791 reads 'Henry Barnes Indentures 6/2',³⁰ and another dated 12 April 1794 'Barnes being the first 4s—4/-',³¹ shows that he served at least three years of his time. He only appears on the payroll for a few weeks after this, and so he presumably never finished his apprenticeship. The workshop records for the period give very little information about the work on which the apprentices were engaged, but the Weekly Account for the Press Room shows that the journeymen devoted much of their time to printing Bible plates from copperplate engravings, and in October 1791 the following entry occurs³²

8 Bible Plates engraved	by J Fittler @ £5.5.0	£42.0.0
4 Do.	by J Johnson	21.0.0
1 Do.	by R Johnson	5.5.0

In July 1792 there is a reference to a 'Perspective view of Mr. Geo. Anderson's House in Pilgrim St by R Johnson—£5.5.0'.³³ This was probably one of the occasions when Robert Johnson, because of his delicate constitution, was 'set to work to make sketches & views, where he had both air & exercise.' He had evidently been unwell earlier in the year, for there is an entry in the Cash Book dated 14 April 'Robert for the time that he was ill £1.4.0 & for this week 5s—£1.9.0.'

Bewick had spent nearly two months from 16 July 1791 at the Wycliffe Museum drawing specimens for his planned *History of British Birds*, and during the next few years much of his time was devoted to this project. To help cope with the increasing workload another apprentice, John Anderson, was taken on in 1792, bringing the total number employed in the workshop up to ten. This comprised the two partners, John and Robert Johnson, Charlton Nesbit, Henry Barnes, John Anderson and three pressmen, George Barber, John Miller and James Fittler. Anderson was the son of Dr James Anderson of Edinburgh, a farmer turned writer. James Anderson had farmed in Aberdeenshire, and it was there that he married Margaret Seton in 1768 and that their son John was born in 1775 (baptized at Foveran 7 May 1775). James Anderson published several essays upon agricultural and other topics, and in 1780 received the degree of LLD from Aberdeen University. He later moved to Edinburgh, where in 1790 he started a weekly paper called *The Bee*; it was through this work that he became a client of Bewick's and arranged for his son to serve his time in the Beilby/Bewick workshop. The proposed terms, which differ from those of Charlton Nesbit, have also been preserved in a note that reads³⁵

That Dr Anderson shall pay to B & B the sum of Sixty Guineas as an Apprentice Fee for the young man & shall find him with Board, lodgings &c, for the term of three years, at the expiration of which time B & B will pay him five shillings per week for the remaining four years.

The Cash Book includes a payment of 15/6 to John Anderson on 8 September 1792, and alongside 'Sepr 10 bound 7 years'.³⁶ The tax on the indentures was evidently paid two months later, when, on 9 November, an entry reads 'Binding John Anderson—£1.5.0'.³⁷ and on 13 September 1793 Dr Anderson paid 'John's Appr. Fee in pt.—£30.0.0'.³⁸ The records show that Anderson was paid a few shillings a week from the start, presumably to cover his board and lodging, but the amounts vary.

1794	Prd ^t forward	116.1 5½
Aug ^t 7	Letter from Kirkwood 7 ^d Gilt oil 9½	10½
9	{ Barber 2.2 Miller 12 Johnson 10	3 12 -
	{ Robert 5 ^d John Anderson 5	10 -
11	Prd ^t Ceps 2 ^d - Booking Par. to Kirkwood	2 2
13	Letter from Pennington	2
16	{ Barber 1.13.6 Miller 14. Johnson 10	3 3 6
	{ Robert 5 John Anderson 5	10 -
	Parcel from Kellus Vlockton	2
	Block from Shields	1
23	{ Barber 1.2 Miller 10 ^d Robt. 5.10	13 -
	{ John Anderson 5 Johnson 10	1 3 -
	Row 1 Booking 2 Par. to Kirkwood	7
	Letter from Thompson	1 2
	2 D ^s from Kirkwood 1.2	1 2
	Subscription to Lewis Thompson's funeral	2 -
28	Charlton Nesbit 1/2 year due 22 ^d m.	5 17 -
	Pr ^d Hall Bookbinder Ballie	6 6
	Lisles Box	6
30	{ Barber 14.6 Miller 11.6	1 6 -
	{ Johnson 5.8 Anderson 5	1 6 -
	Letter from Edinburgh Encl ^d	7
	Booking a Parcel to Kirkwood	2
	Pags 1 ^d Letter 1/7	1 5 6
Sept 6	{ Barber 15.6 Miller 10 ^d	1 5 6
	{ Anderson 5 Johnson 6.6	5
	Parcel from Thompson	137.7.3

Page from Cash Book Jan 1792 to May 1796 (Twas 1269/3), recording the end of Robert Johnson's employment in the workshop

Henry Barnes left in May 1794, and three months later so did Robert Johnson. The Cash Book entry for 23 August includes a last payment of 5/- to Robert, and alongside Bewick has written 'Finis R Johnson'.³⁹ Bewick had a great respect for Johnson's artistic ability, saying that⁴⁰ the practical knowledge I had attained in colouring, was imparted to him & he saved me a great deal, of what I considered a loss of my time in being taken up in this way – and besides he soon coloured them in a stile superiour to my hasty productions of that kind – indeed, in this he became super-excellent, & as I conceived he could hardly be equalled, in his water coloured drawings of views & landscapes, by any artist – for some time, I continued to sketch his figures, but at length he needed none of my help, in this way. In spite of this respect, relations between the two men were often strained. Bewick had Johnson in mind when, in discussing in his *Memoir* whether he might have been happier working on his own without apprentices, he wrote⁴¹

...that I have taken a Boy & behaved to him uniformly with the kindness of a Father or a Brother & have watched with every pains in my power to instruct him – been liberal to him in pecuniary matters – employed the best physician to attend him when he was unwell – let him want for nothing – paid him his wages besides, whether at work or not at work, & in this my partner contributed his share, – and along with myself used every endeavour in our power to advance him in the world, & when all this was done, he shewed not a particle of gratitude, but observed that any 'cartman would take care of his Horse', & then put himself under the guidance & directions of a Company or confederacy of ill disposed envious & malignant persons, who after having laboured to poison the ears of the public & of the Jury – to bring us to trial, for the pay for work done without the leave of his masters, while he was our apprentice! & the business was so managed that a verdict was given against us.

The court case arose from an offer by the Earl of Bute to buy a portfolio of Johnson's drawings leading to a dispute between Johnson and his masters as to who was entitled to the money. Johnson took the case to court, but in the meantime, having completed his apprenticeship, he left the workshop and took an apartment in Mosley Street where he taught drawing. The litigation dragged on – an entry in the records of the Sheriff's Court reads⁴²

7 Sep^r 1796 Robert Johnson

agst
Ralph Beilby and
Thomas Bewick

Judgment unless the Defendants
plead on or before the next Court

R H

By this time Johnson had been commissioned by Morrisons, booksellers in Perth, to make copies of portraits in the collection of the Earl of Breadalbane at Taymouth. While working there he was taken ill and died in tragic circumstances on 29 October 1796, aged 25. The court case was finally settled in his favour two months later, and the Cash Book records the payment of £11.5.6 to Mr Bainbridge 'Atty for R Johnson'.⁴³

There has been much speculation about the extent of Robert Johnson's contribution to Bewick's works. John Jackson credited him with the design of many of the tail-pieces in the *Birds*, and also says that⁴⁴

Johnson's water-colour drawings for most of the cuts in Bewick's 'Fables' are extremely beautiful. They are the soul of the cuts, and as a set are perhaps the finest small drawings of the kind that were ever made... It is known by only a few people that they were drawn by Johnson during his apprenticeship.

The fact that the *Fables* were not published until 1818, twenty-four years after Johnson left the workshop, makes this seem unlikely. Jackson is said to have obtained his information from Edward Willis, but Willis did not start his apprenticeship until after Johnson's death, and cannot therefore have had any first-hand knowledge. Again, a statement published in *The Scottish Gallery* that Bewick employed Johnson 'to trace the figures on the Wood in his elegant *History of Quadrupeds*' was vehemently denied by Bewick; and although another apprentice professed to have seen Johnson drawing some of the figures afterwards used, it must be remembered that he cannot have started his apprenticeship until after the first edition had been published.⁴⁵ John Laws, who worked alongside the two Johnsons for so many years, seems to have kept out of the argument. There now seems little doubt, however, that Robert Johnson designed many of the tail-pieces used in the *Birds*. It is interesting to note that during the ten years or more that he spent in the workshop his weekly pay never exceeded five shillings.

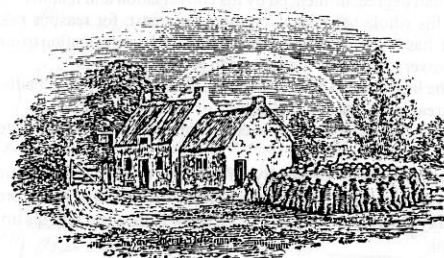
At the time of Robert's departure John Johnson was still employed in the workshop, but only two weeks later an entry in the Cash Book reads 'J Johnson badly' (the expression used to denote absence through illness), and in the following week, on 13 September, a terse note has been added 'J Johnson Died this Day'.⁴⁶ The *Newcastle Journal* for 20 September 1794 carried a brief obituary 'Died: Sunday last, of a fever, Mr John Johnson, in the 25th year of his age; he had been long in the employment of Messrs. Beilby and Bewick, engravers, of this town, and was a most industrious and promising youth.' He was buried in the churchyard of St John's Church alongside his father, who with Bewick's support had

1794	Brought forward	137	7	5
Sept 9	Black lead Pencils of Don	1	1	6
	For 1 st Packing Paper 4 Candles 1 st			6
	Pence from Fildun on 6. candle 3 rd			9
	Working a parcel to Fildun			2
11	Poor Cops	2		
	Coating 12 traps stamps	1		
12	Cleaning stairs & mending a lock	3		
	Letter from Nicholson Manchester	1		
	Brown Paper			1
13	Barber 1-11-6 Miller 10-6	2	2	
Jr. Johnson Died this Day	Johnson bad 6 Anderson 5	11		
	4 Camel hair Pencils			6
	Letter of Coals			5
	Letter from Kirkwood			7
	turning a fillet 6 th Candles 7 th			1
20	Barber 13 Miller 4/6	17	6	
	John Anderson	5		
	Rud Sunderland a letter 3 rd 11 candle 4 th			8
	Letter from Thompson 5 th Letter 2 nd			9
27	Barber 18-6 Miller 10-6	1	9	
	John Anderson	5		
29	Parcel of Muth. Cuts from Kirkwood			1
	2 traps stamps for Kirkwood			2
	Steel off pen 2 nd			1
Oct 14	Barber 13 Miller 10-6 Anderson 5	1	8	6
	Machery Paper 4 th Candles 1-2			1
		146	10	9

Page from Cash Book Jan 1792 to May 1796 (TWAS 1269/3), recording the death of John Johnson on 13 September 1794

obtained the post of manager of St John's Poorhouse, and who had died two years before.

Although John Johnson was employed in the Beilby/Bewick workshop for more than 11 years, and according to Bewick was 'put to do engraving on Wood', there are few if any wood engravings that can be positively identified as his work. The tail-piece of an old man and a boy by a monument in *British Birds* (Volume 2, 1804, p 220) was attributed to him by Chatto and Jackson, but Iain Bain has pointed out that this cannot be correct – the workshop records show that it was engraved in the week ending 20 September 1800, six years after Johnson's death. He was however responsible for the design of 'The Hermit at his Morning Devotions', a fine woodcut engraved by Bewick for *Poems by Goldsmith and Parnell* (1795). Bewick clearly had a high opinion of him, and it is reasonable to suppose that he was involved to some extent with the production of the first edition of *the Birds*. It is a remarkable coincidence that after working together for so many years the two Johnsons should both have been lost to the workshop within three weeks.



Cockfight under a rainbow, engraving by Henry Hole from *British Birds* (1805), vol 1, p 312

1794–1801: Some Troublesome Apprentices

The departure of Henry Barnes in May 1794, followed by that of Robert Johnson in August and the death of John Johnson in September, left Charlton Nesbit and John Anderson as the only apprentices in the

workshop. They were soon joined by a young man with the unlikely name of Henry Fulke Plantagenet Woolacombe Hole, whose father, a member of a well-known Devonshire family, was a captain in the Lancashire militia. A note in Bewick's Accounts, dated 3 October 1801 'Henry F P W Hole out of his apprenticeship & gave him his indentures this night'⁴⁷ indicates that he started in October 1794.

John Anderson was evidently giving his masters a great deal of trouble. Montague Weekley in his book *Thomas Bewick* published in 1953⁴⁸ quotes a document then in the possession of Ralph Bewick (1872-1956)

State of matters between R Beilby and T Bewick engravers Newcastle, and their apprentice John Anderson, being grounds of accusation against the said apprentice for various misdemeanours — viz

1st That the said apprentice has neglected his work at various times, by absenting himself from the workshop, by irregularity in his attendance, and by otherwise wasting his time —

2nd That upon being rebuked by his masters for such neglect, he has always returned indecent and insulting answers, thereby setting a bad example to the other apprentices in the shop, whom we have every reason to believe he has, in no small degree, influenced by his conversation and manner —

3 That his whole behaviour for some time past, for reasons best known to himself, has appeared to be the result of a fixed determination to do everything in his power to provoke his masters to violent measures

4 That he has, knowingly and wilfully, finished his work as badly as possible to the great injury as well as discredit of the said masters —

And lastly, that he has totally absented himself from the said masters' service.

Newcastle Mar 18 1795

The partners were evidently preparing to take legal action against Anderson because of his failure to honour the terms of his apprenticeship, and two days later, on 20 March 1795, the following entries appear in the Cash Book⁴⁹

Warrant to apprehend Jno Anderson!	2/6
Sergeants fee!	2/6
Letter from Dr Anderson	7d

On 4 May 1795 £2.2.0 was paid to Mr Punshon as 'our part of Mr H Williamson's fee as arbitrator in Anderson's affair.'⁵⁰ After that Anderson's name disappears from the workshop records for good. This leaves a question mark over his subsequent career. Some time in 1803 or 1804 he went to South America (according to Dobson) or Botany Bay (according to Henry Hole in a letter to Bewick dated 21 October 1804),⁵¹ and was lost to wood engraving. In view of the rebellious character he

1795	Pro ^d forward	24	18	-
Mar 9	Loggner Plate from London	3	8	
	Lisle's Man forming Saw		6	
	Dr. setting a Saw	2	2	
	Parcel from Thompson		4	
	Oil		3h	
	Mr Finlinton Carriage Ball	1	12	
	Dutch Pink 7 ^d pencils	4	5	
14	Barber 10/6 Miller 15 London	1	10	6
17	Coals & cartage 5-5 Parc ^d Thompson	5	6	
	Letter from Stockton		2	
	Dr. from Kirkwood		7	
	Dr. from Beckett 2 ^d old Richardm?		4	
20	Warrant to apprehend Jno Anderson!	2	6	
	Sergeants fee!		2	6
	Letter from Dr. Anderson		7	
21	Jno ^r Miller 12 Barber 10/6	1	2	6
	Letter from Dr. Anderson		7	
	Dr. Smith for Chatter Door plate		6	
	And ^r Price 6 ^d L ^r from Rinford 10	1	4	
	Cleaning out the Little House		4	
20	Barber 10 Miller 6		16	
	Letter from Kirkwood		2	
	Imp ^r 1 ^d Letter 1		2	
31	Charlton Nesbitt 6/10 due 22 ^d	5	17	
		36	17	4/2

Page from Cash Book Jan 1792 to May 1796 (TWAS 1269/3), showing payment for warrant to apprehend John Anderson

displayed as an apprentice one cannot help wondering whether he was finally transported, but there is nothing in Bewick's *Memoir* or in any other account of the apprentices to substantiate this idea. On the contrary there is evidence that he became a very accomplished wood engraver: the first edition of Robert Bloomfield's *The Farmer's Boy* was published in 1800 'With Wood Engravings by Anderson', and the cuts are of such a



Engraving for Spring by John Anderson from Bloomfield's *The Farmer's Boy* (4th edn, 1801)

high standard that they have often been attributed to Bewick himself. It seems inconceivable that the apprentice depicted by Bewick, after serving only 2½ years in the workshop, could have produced work comparable with that of his master. So where did he spend the intervening years?

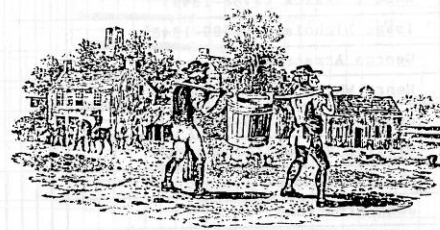
The Cash Book shows that another apprentice was soon taken on. An entry dated 12 May 1795 reads 'Sir John Lawson Bart for Chas Hickson's Apprentice fee—£30'.⁵² and this is followed on 9 June by the payment of fifteen shillings duty on the Indentures. For the next two years there were three apprentices in the workshop: Charlton Nesbit, Henry Hole and Charles Hickson (or Hixon, as his name is frequently spelt). Nesbit was nearing the end of his apprenticeship, and his engravings published along with those of Thomas and John Bewick in Le Grand's *Fabliaux* in 1796 show that he had already attained a high degree of skill. A Cash Book entry for 22 August 1796 'Charlton Nesbit's last paymt—£6.10.0'.⁵³ marks the end of his apprenticeship, but he stayed on in the workshop for

another year. The last reference to him in the Cash Book is dated 14 October 1797, when the entry reads 'Pd Nesbit's Ballance—£5.5.0'.⁵⁴

Soon after leaving the workshop Nesbit engraved a view of St Nicholas' Church from a drawing by Robert Johnson, to be sold on behalf of Johnson's parents. Its size, 15 inches by 12 inches, was claimed to be the largest engraving on wood ever attempted. An award for this work was made to Nesbit by the Society of Arts, and in 1802 he received the Society's silver medal. He worked in London from 1799 to 1815, earning a high reputation as a skilful engraver. On coming into an inheritance he returned to the North for some years, but he went back to London in 1830 and died at Brompton on 11 November 1838 at the age of 63. In his *Memoir* Bewick says that⁵⁵

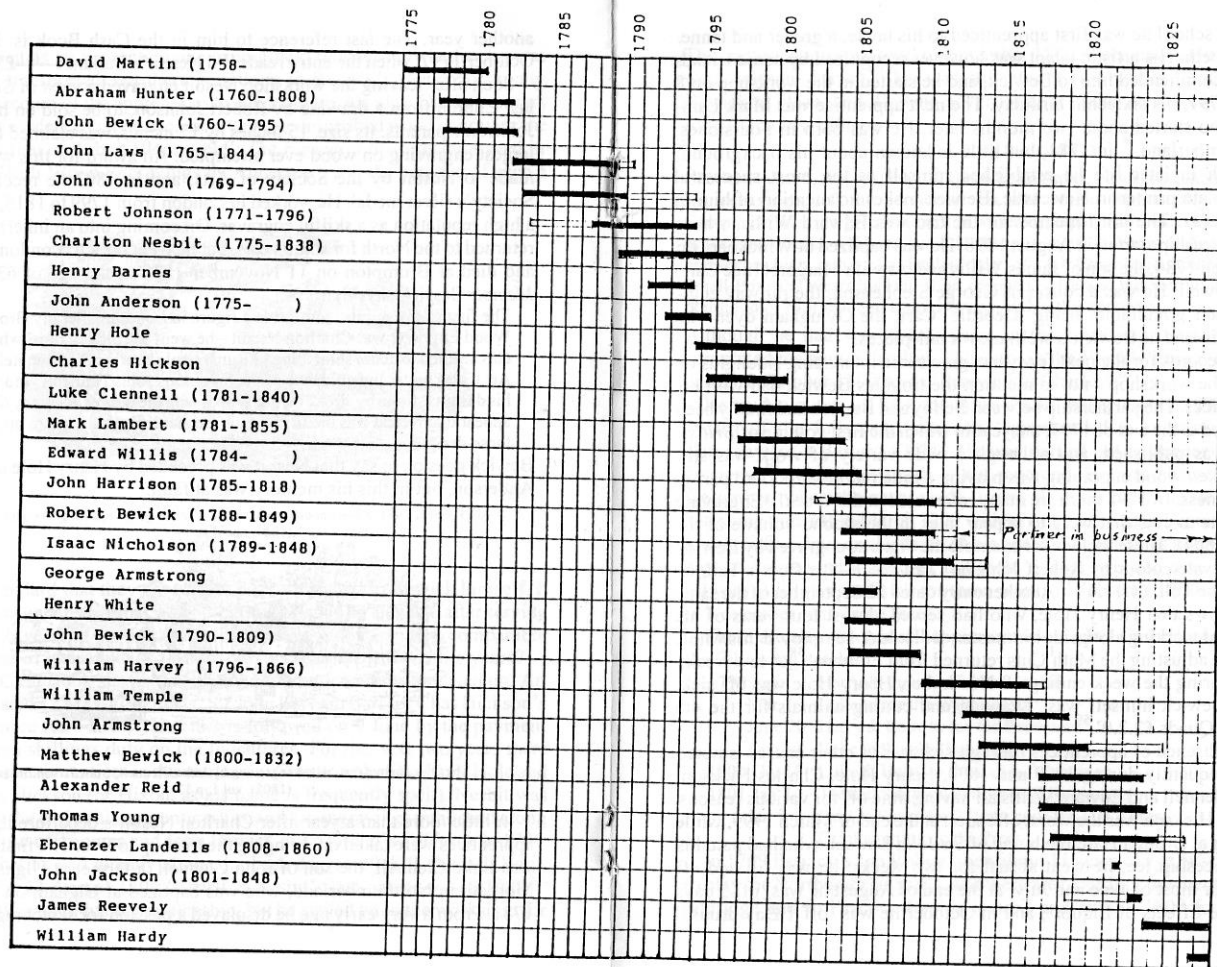
The first of my pupils, who made a figure in London, after my Brother, as a Wood Engraver was Charlton Nesbit—he went at a nick of time, when wood cuts seemed to claim something like universal attention & fortunately for that Art it was under the guidance of the ingenious John Thurston who pencilled his designs stroke by stroke on the Wood, with the utmost accuracy & it would appear that Nesbit was the first, by his mechanical excellence to do justice to these designs.

Bewick goes on to say that Nesbit was preceded by Henry Hole and John Anderson, but in this his memory was at fault.



The Ovingham dyers, wood engraving by Luke Clennell, from *British Birds* (1805), vol 1, p 17

In little more than a year after Charlton Nesbit's departure three new apprentices were taken on, bringing the total up to five. The first of these was Luke Clennell, the son of John Clennell, a farmer at Ulgham, near Morpeth in Northumberland, who was baptized at Ulgham on 11 June 1781. From a very early age he displayed a passion for sketching, but on



Apprentices in the Beilby/Bewick Workshop

leaving school he was first apprenticed to his uncle, a grocer and tanner in Morpeth. His artistic talent was however recognized by some friends who recommended him to Bewick, and he started in the workshop on 8 April 1797, his sixteenth birthday. The next apprentice was Mark Lambert, who started about two months later. He was born in Fourstones, Northumberland,⁵⁶ in 1781, but little is known about his background; although in later life he established himself as the most successful copperplate printer in Newcastle, Bewick makes no mention of him in his *Memoir*. The third member of the trio was Edward Willis, whose apprenticeship started in August 1798. He was baptized at Whickham on 14 March 1784, the son of James Willis and his wife Margaret (née Carr) of Swalwell. He was a cousin of George Stephenson, the railway engineer, their grandfather being 'Geordie' Carr, the Ovingham dyer who figures in one of Bewick's well-known tail-pieces.

The records for the next few years give some interesting sidelights on life in the workshop – not to mention the troubles Bewick had with his apprentices. The partnership between Beilby and Bewick had finally been dissolved at the end of 1797, the year in which the first volume of *British Birds* was published, and although a wide variety of work was still undertaken wood engraving was playing a much more important part in the business. In 1798 there are many references in the Weekly Engraving Accounts to cuts that were to appear later in the second volume of the *Birds* (1804). These include for example the vignette engraved by Bewick from a watercolour by Robert Johnson 'Tail-piece – the Cow's Tail, or saving the Toll, £1.11.6'.⁵⁷ Another entry dated 22 September of the same year shows that Henry Hole, who had served almost four years of his time, was working alongside his master: 'H Hole & I employ'd this whole Week in adjusting the Matl' Cuts returned from Edinbro'.⁵⁸ A few weeks later, during the week ending 10 November, Henry Hole was off sick, while Bewick himself was 'Drawing and cutting animals for the 4th Edition Quads £2.2.0'.⁵⁹

The absence of apprentices through sickness or other causes is noted quite frequently during 1799 and 1800, Henry Hole, Charles Hickson, Luke Clennell and Edward Willis all having time off for various reasons. Charles Hickson was the worst offender: at the end of March 1799, while working at Brough Hall, the home of Sir John Lawson who had paid his apprenticeship fee, he went absent for two weeks; he was 'ill and off work' for most of June and July; at the end of August he was 'off 3 days from the Effects of Liquor'; and in October he was 'off 1 Day drunk!'

This pattern continued until 6 September 1800, when he was 'off all this week without leave'.⁶⁰ He was still absent five weeks later, causing Bewick to place the following advertisement in the *Newcastle Courant* for 11 October 1800

APPRENTICE ABSCONDED

Charles Hickson, Apprentice to T Bewick, Engraver, Newcastle, having, about six weeks ago, left the Service of his said Master without any Cause or Complaint: this is to give Notice, that whoever employs him will be prosecuted as the Law directs. – The above C Hickson is about 21 Years of Age, 5 Feet 7 or 8 Inches high, rather of a slender Make, of a fair Complexion, pitted with the Small-Pox, and wears his Hair short cropped. – He was last seen in the neighbourhood of Morpeth and Long Horsley, in Northumberland.

Although he had served five years in the workshop, Hickson never completed his apprenticeship. The entry in the Weekly Engraving Book dated 18 October 1800 reads 'Farewell to Charles!'.⁶¹

Henry Hole was off sick for three weeks in September 1799, and in March of the following year was 'apprehended & in custody since Thursday for a Bastard Child.' He was 'bailed out to appear at the 1/4 sessions',⁶² with what result is not recorded. He was absent again in December, when the entry reads 'Harry ill (alias hipt)'. Luke Clennell had some time off in March 1799 with a lame foot, and in September was away for five days on the death of his sister. At Christmas he spent a few days at home with his father, but took '2 days over the time allow'd'. Edward Willis was off sick for three weeks in February 1800, and again in November with 'sore feet'.

There are also records of happier occasions. The Cash Book includes the following entries⁶³

1799 Jan	Harry & Luke to Fishers Benefit	2-0
Mar 1	Luke to see the Wild Beasts	1-0
June 20	Harry & Luke to see the Panorama	2-0
Aug 1st	Luke to the play last night	2-0
1800 Oct 18	Luke & Harry to the Exhibi ⁿ Paintings	2-0
1801 Jan 3	Treated Simpson & Barber @ Robinsons	1-2
Jan 9	Paid Jo Smith for 2 Brass cods for Tim's Press	3-6
	Drinks setting up the Press	2-6

In 1799 Bewick's son Robert, then about 11 years of age, was learning to play the Northumbrian pipes, and there are records of payments to John Aldridge and to Peacock for his lessons and in July 1800 for a 'New

chanter for my Boy's Pipes—3d'.⁶⁴ The two latter entries are illustrated with typical Bewick thumb-nail sketches.

In September 1801 Bewick took his family to stay for a few weeks at Willy Dean's cottage at Tynemouth, and a letter he wrote whilst there to his sister-in-law Esther Elliot gives an amusing picture of an incident in the workshop.⁶⁵

Tynmouth, Tuesday Night
13 October 1801

Dear Aunt,

I have just now received a Letter from Luke, informing me that the Newcastle Bank wants a number of Bills printed immediately; therefore, as soon as you receive this letter you must go along to the Shop with the Key of the Desk, which you will find in my Pocket Book, in my Night Cap Drawer,—it is the largest Key of the bunch—and when you have opened the Shop Desk with it, you must desire George to get the Bill Plate wanted, which he will find in the bool hole over which there is a paper pasted with NOTES upon it—Luke does not know the Plate, & it is on that acc that you must get George to seek it out from amongst the other plates of the same kind, which are in the same place along with it.

The letter goes on to say that while it is being written Robert is playing to old Willy Dean in the kitchen, and that Jane has had her bathing dress stolen from Willy's garden!

A few days earlier Bewick had noted in the Weekly Engraving Book 'Oct' 3 At Tynmouth this week. Henry F P W Hole out of his apprenticeship, & gave him his Indentures this Night'.⁶⁶ Five weeks later Hole left Newcastle for Liverpool. In spite of the episode of the bastard child, Bewick evidently had a soft spot for Henry Hole, and in a letter dated 4 December 1801 to Mr T Vernon, a picture dealer in Liverpool, he wrote⁶⁷

The Bearer of this — my late pupil, Mr Henry Hole — intends to begin business in Liverpool, and probably it may be in your power to shew him some civilities in the shape of advice &c. He knows but little of mankind and the world into which he is just launched. You will find he has read a good deal, is of a poetic and romantic turn of mind, is unsettled, and does not know where to cast Anchor and moor in Safety. I cannot help figuring in my mind that he is like a Ship without a Pilot, and for his safety and welfare I am extremely anxious; and indeed (although I shall not shew it to him) I shall be inwardly much grieved at bidding him farewell, for I think I shall never see him again. I hope, however, from his sobriety and attention, that he will, when more settled, make a figure in the line of his profession, and be a credit to the place where he was reared.

Hole, who during his time with Bewick had been responsible for several of the cuts in Volume 2 of *British Birds*, worked as an engraver in Liverpool for some years. His best-known work in this period was for Ackermann's *Religious Emblems* (1809). He became a member of the Liverpool Academy, and at their exhibition in 1814 contributed 'An Attempt to restore the Old Method of Cross-lining on Wood'. On the death of his grandfather he inherited the estate of Ebberley Hall in Devonshire and retired from the profession, and remained in touch with Bewick right up to the time of the latter's death.

1801–1819: Some with Talent

When Henry Hole left for Liverpool in November 1801 there were three apprentices in the workshop: Luke Clennell, Mark Lambert and Edward Willis. The bibulous George Barber was still employed in the press room, and another journeyman named Nicholson also appears in the Weekly Accounts about this time. A year later, in November 1802, Bewick took on his nephew John Harrison, the son of his sister Agnes who had married John Harrison, a farmer of Hedley, in 1777. The young John Harrison was baptized at Ovingham in July 1785, and although he appears on the workshop payroll in November 1802 he was not formally bound until 8 June 1803, when he would be 18 years of age. An allowance was evidently made for the time he had already served, for a note in the Weekly Engraving Book for 1809 reads 'The end of 1809 — John Harrison out of his apprenticeship'.⁶⁸ There was a delay in paying the tax on his indentures, an entry in the Cash Book recording the payment of £1.2.0 on 4 August 1804 for 'John Harrison's Indenture due since June'.⁶⁹ That there were variations in the terms of the apprenticeships is indicated by the fact that in 1802 Luke Clennell, after serving five years, was being paid 6 shillings per week, Mark Lambert, who had started two months later, was being paid 7 shillings, while John Harrison received 5 shillings right from the start.

Luke Clennell completed his apprenticeship on 9 April 1804, but stayed on for a few more months during which he worked with Bewick on illustrations for Solomon Hodgson's *The Hive of Ancient and Modern Literature* and Hume's *History of England*. An interesting entry in the Cash Book for this period records the payment of 4 shillings on 25 June 1804 'To see the Wax Works & Crocodile &c'.⁷⁰ In November 1804 Clennell accepted the invitation of the publishers of Hume's *History of England* to complete the commission in London, and the workshop Cash

Book entry for 23 November reads 'Final settlement with Luke Clennell, Ball £5.0.3. Old Debt allowed £8.17.6'.⁷¹ Clennell was one of Bewick's most gifted pupils, and was responsible for several of the tailpieces in the second volume of *British Birds*, published in 1804. He had a successful career in London as a wood engraver and watercolourist, one of his more important commissions being illustrations for *The Border Antiquities of England and Scotland*. He later took up painting in oils, and in 1816 won a prize at the British Institution for 'The Overthrow of the French Army at the Battle of Waterloo – *Sauve qui Peut*'. In 1817, while working on a vast oil painting commissioned by the Earl of Bridgewater he lost his reason and never fully recovered. He died in 1840. In his *Memoir* Bewick wrote⁷²

Another of my pupils of distinguished ability, both as a draftsman and Wood Engraver, was Luke Clennell whose melancholly history will be well remembered by the Artists of London & else where, and the sympathetic feelings, which was drawn forth & shewn to him by a generous public, by their subscriptions to a Print of the battle of Waterloo, from his painting of the decisive charge of the Guards, on that eventfull day –

Clennell is one of the few apprentices of whose appearance we have some knowledge; Edward Willis described him as being 'rather little, somewhat in-kneed, and having a peculiar look with his eyes'.⁷³ There is also a pencilled self-portrait in the Laing Art Gallery.

A Cash Book entry of 14 July 1804 'Mark out of his time'⁷⁴ records the completion of Mark Lambert's apprenticeship. It seems that he had been underpaid for a year, because a note in the following week reads 'Paid Mark 1 year @ 1s per week—£2.12.0.' He stayed on in the workshop for a few more weeks, his name appearing on the payroll for the last time on 1 September 1804. Although not mentioned by Bewick in his *Memoir*, Lambert was a highly skilled copperplate engraver and soon established a flourishing business of his own. He is particularly noted for his engravings for bookplates. It is interesting to note that Parson's and White's Directory (1827) lists him as an engraver and copperplate printer at Number 22 St Nicholas Churchyard, only a few doors away from Thomas Bewick & Son at Number 16.

In the meantime new apprentices were being taken on. Bewick's son Robert, born on 26 August 1788, was bound for seven years on 26 May 1804,⁷⁵ shortly before his sixteenth birthday. He was closely followed by Isaac Nicholson, baptized at Melmerby on 8 March 1789, who was bound on 18 August 1804, and by George Armstrong, bound on 4 September.

Little is known about Armstrong, but as he only remained with Bewick for two years, during which time he was paid five shillings per week, it is probable that he had already served most of his time under another master. A few days later another apprentice who had served part of his time came to the workshop. This was Henry White, who according to entries in the Cash Book arrived 15 September, and on 29 November was 'bound this Day'.⁷⁶ Bewick wrote in his *Memoir* that 'Henry White, from London, was engaged to me to serve out the remainder of his apprenticeship, when his master, the late Mr Lee died'.⁷⁷



A sportsman and his dog by the seashore, engraved by Henry White, from *British Birds* (1821), vol 2, p 310

By the end of 1804 Bewick was therefore employing six apprentices: Edward Willis, who was in the final year of his apprenticeship; John Harrison, who had been in the workshop for about two years; George Armstrong and Henry White, both of whom had already served part of their time under other masters; and Robert Bewick and Isaac Nicholson. In addition, although not yet formally bound, Bewick's 14-year-old nephew John Bewick (the son of his brother William) was already employed in the workshop. The following memorandum dated 10 November 1805 and signed by Thomas Bewick is in the Pease Collection in Newcastle City Library.⁷⁸

John Bewick my nephew was bound to me for seven years, according to this indenture, but in consideration of his having been with me nearly a year, I promised in a written Memorandum, which I gave to his Father, that his apprenticeship for that term should commence on 1 day of January 1805 & end on the 1 day of Jan^y 1812.

How many thousands will be numbered with the dead before that day!

The last sentence was strangely prophetic, for John Bewick did not live to complete his apprenticeship. He died on 24 September 1809, aged 19. The Cash Book records that he was bound on 18 November 1805, and that on 26 September 1809 the sum of four shillings was paid to 'John Harrison - Expences to Jn^o Bewick's Funeral'.⁷⁹

Edward Willis completed his apprenticeship in August 1805, and after the entry for 17 August in the Weekly Engraving Book Bewick has written 'Edw^d Willis' last Wages as an Apprentice—Memorandum—never a cross word passed between us, the whole seven years'.⁸⁰ Willis stayed on in the workshop, however, and the next apprentice to leave was George Armstrong. He left on 20 September 1806, when Bewick noted in the Weekly Engraving Book 'Gave George Armstrong his Bond & Indentures'.⁸¹ Armstrong later collaborated with the Newcastle engraver James Walker, engraving 'The Principal Eccentric Characters of Newcastle upon Tyne' (c 1818) from the painting by Henry Perlee Parker.⁸² He was also the master under whom John Jackson served before coming to complete his apprenticeship under Bewick.

Henry White spent a little over three years in the workshop. A note in the Weekly Engraving Account dated 18 September 1807 reads 'Henry out of his Apprenticeship', but he remained on the books for a few months longer. On 9 January 1808, underneath payments to Henry [White], John [Harrison] and Isaac [Nicholson], Bewick has written (and underlined) 'Last of Henry White'.⁸³ In his *Memoir* Bewick wrote⁸⁴

When the term of his engagement with me was ended—he returned to London, and chiefly turned his attention to the imitation of sketchy *cross hatching* on Wood, from the inimitable pencil of M Cruikshanks, & perhaps some other artists in this same way – Henry White appears to have taken the lead of others, who followed that manner of cutting, which shortly became *quite the Ton*.

White was a skilled engraver, and soon after joining Bewick was responsible for a vignette in Thomson's *The Seasons*. He also engraved some of the tail-pieces in *British Birds* Vol 2 (1821) and designs by Thurston for *The Poetic Works of Robert Burns*, published by Catnach & Davison of Alnwick in 1808. He went on to pursue a successful career in London.

During 1807 the Press Work Accounts recording the work done and the wages drawn by George Barber are illustrated with sketches by Bewick showing rows of tankards and glasses, the number of which varies from week to week depending on Barber's state of inebriation.⁸⁵ Barber was finally sacked at the end of the year, and William Kennedy

1007	Geo. Barber D	Wages	1007	Geo. Barber C	Work
Jan'y	By Balance due	6 39	Jan'y 3	By Balance due	9 3
- 3	By Cash	1 -		By Cash	1 -
	6 p'st sent for a Harvest	1 5		By Cash	1 -
	1 p'st sent for a Harvest	1 -		By Cash	1 -
- 10	Cash	1 -	10	By Cash	1 -
- 17	Cash	1 -	17	By Cash	1 -
24		1 -	24	By Cash	1 -
31		2 -	31	By Cash	1 -
Feb'y 7		1 -	Feb'y 7	By Cash	1 -
14		1 -	14	By Cash	1 -
2		1 -	2	By Cash	1 -
28		1 -	28	By Cash	1 -
Mar 7		1 -	Mar 7	By Cash	1 -
14		1 -	14	By Cash	1 -
21		1 -	21	By Cash	1 -
28		1 -	28	By Cash	1 -
Mar 11		1 -	Mar 11	By Cash	1 -
18		1 -	18	By Cash	1 -
25		1 -	25	By Cash	1 -
Apr 1		1 -	Apr 1	By Cash	1 -
8		1 -	8	By Cash	1 -
15		1 -	15	By Cash	1 -
22		1 -	22	By Cash	1 -
29		1 -	29	By Cash	1 -
Mar 30		1 -	Mar 30	By Cash	1 -

Page opening from Press Work Account Book Jan 1810 to Feb 1811 (TWAS 1269/77), showing George Barber's wages and value of work done

was taken on as a replacement. He had to be brought from London, and the Cash Book shows a payment on 19 February 1808 '...for Wm Kennedy's Passage by sea—£1.11.0'.⁸⁶ While waiting for Kennedy's arrival the presses were operated by the apprentice John Harrison and William and Ann Orr.

Edward Willis, who had stayed on with Bewick after completing his apprenticeship, eventually left in 1809 when a Cash Book entry records 'Feb 16 E Willis final settlement 8-0'.⁸⁷ For the next four years he worked in London, but after the death of his wife in 1813⁸⁸ he returned to the northeast and worked for Bewick once more—not always to the latter's satisfaction—an entry in the Weekly Engraving Book for 1814 reads 'Davison No 8-10. 9 by Edw^d Willis will not do!'.⁸⁹ In spite of this, Bewick had a high regard for Willis; in his *Memoir* he says⁹⁰

The next of my pupils, who chiefly turned his attention to Wood engraving was Edward Willis, who while he remained with me was much on a par with Nesbit, but did not equal him in the mechanical excellence Nesbit had attained to in London—I had a great regard for Edward Willis on account of his regular good behaviour while he was under my tuition—he has now been long a resident in London.

Willis had in fact returned to London in 1817, a note by Robert Bewick in the Weekly Engraving Book recording that 'E Willis sailed for London May 13th 1817'.⁹⁷ Willis provided Chatto and Jackson with much of the information about the apprentices' contribution to Bewick's works that was used in their *Treatise on Wood Engraving*, but little is known about his own work.

With the death of John Bewick in September 1809 the number of apprentices was reduced to three: John Harrison (who had only three more months to serve), Robert Bewick and Isaac Nicholson. On 27 November however 'Wm Harvey came on Tryal'⁹² and a few weeks later, on 1 January 1810, the Cash Book records the payment of five shillings 'Expenses at William Harvey's binding'.⁹³ Harvey, the son of the keeper of the Public Baths at Westgate, was born at Newcastle on 13 July 1796, and was therefore not yet 14 years of age when he was bound. He soon showed exceptional talent, and it was not long before his name was appearing regularly against work listed in the Weekly Engraving Book. In the meantime John Harrison had completed his apprenticeship at the end of 1809, but continued to work in the workshop. William Kennedy, the press-man from London, had proved no more reliable than his predecessor George Barber, and on 1 February 1810 Bewick had noted

1811	John Dixon	1811	James Butler
Balton	2000 Bells 23 Bellsbury	13	4
Hammond	3000 Bells 6 Bells	4	4
Proctor	3000 Bells 6 Bells	2	1
Humboldt	3000 Bells 6 Bells	2	6
Proctor	3000 Bells 6 Bells	2	3
Cash borrowed		1	3
Sept 21		1	3
Sept 21	1000 Bells 6 Bells	3	3
Sept 21	1500 Bells 6 Bells	7	6
Sept 21	2000 Bells 6 Bells	1	4
Sept 21	2500 Bells 6 Bells	3	4
Sept 21	3000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	3500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	4000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	4500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	5000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	5500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	6000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	6500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	7000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	7500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	8000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	8500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	9000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	9500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	10000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	10500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	11000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	11500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	12000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	12500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	13000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	13500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	14000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	14500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	15000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	15500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	16000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	16500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	17000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	17500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	18000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	18500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	19000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	19500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	20000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	20500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	21000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	21500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	22000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	22500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	23000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	23500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	24000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	24500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	25000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	25500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	26000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	26500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	27000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	27500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	28000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	28500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	29000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	29500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	30000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	30500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	31000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	31500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	32000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	32500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	33000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	33500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	34000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	34500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	35000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	35500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	36000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	36500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	37000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	37500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	38000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	38500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	39000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	39500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	40000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	40500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	41000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	41500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	42000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	42500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	43000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	43500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	44000 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21	44500 Bells 6 Bells	1	3
Sept 21			

Extract from Press Work Weekly Account Book Jan 1811 to Dec 1813 (TWAS 1269/71), showing various pressmen employed in the workshop

in the Press Work Account Book 'Kennedy off', and appended a thumb-nail sketch of a man running towards a gallows.⁹⁴ Ann Orr returned as a temporary replacement.

On 26 May 1810 the Weekly Engraving Book records 'R E Bewick out of his time'.⁹⁵ Robert had only served six years instead of the usual seven, but Bewick evidently felt that he was ready to take more responsibility in the running of the business. He himself was not in the best of health (a few months later the workshop records contain several references to 'fits' and 'stupid fits'), and he was probably hoping that Robert could relieve him of some of the load. Bewick's nephew John Harrison was also subject to fits, and there are notes such as that on 8 April 1810 'John set off to Sunderland for Dr Brown's advice - advanced him 20s Note', and on 7 December 1811 'John Harrison lost his senses this day'.⁹⁶ The situation in the press room remained unsettled throughout 1811; among the various characters mentioned in the workshop records were James Butler, who after working for a few weeks went 'off on Tramp' on 25 September, and John Dixon 'alias George Chadwick alias Shadwick' who is sketched going to the gallows on 19 October. In the end Bewick took back the bibulous George Barber, but he also took on his nephew William Bewick, then aged 20, to train as a copperplate printer. William Bewick was to remain in the workshop until long after Bewick's death in 1828; Barber left again in 1816, only to turn up again like a bad penny in 1825.

By the end of 1811 William Harvey was the only apprentice still serving his time. Isaac Nicholson, who had completed his apprenticeship on 6 July 1811, was still employed in the workshop, as were John Harrison and Robert Bewick, but there were only four men (excluding the press-men) to assist Bewick, compared with the seven employed five years earlier. The following advertisement appeared in the Newcastle papers on 1 January 1812

THOMAS BEWICK,
Engraver and Copperplate Printer, Newcastle-upon-Tyne,
RETURNS his grateful Thanks to his Friends and
Customers for past Favours, and begs Leave to inform
them, that he has taken his Son, ROBERT ELLIOT
BEWICK, into Partnership. The Business will be carried on
in all its Branches, under the Firm of THOMAS BEWICK & SON;
and all Orders with which they may be favoured, will be punctu-
ally executed, in the best Manner, and on the lowest Terms.

An APPRENTICE wanted.
A few Imperial Copies of the History of Quadrupeds, Price
1l. 11s. 6d.; and Royal Copies of the History of British Birds,
2 Vols. 1l. 16s., remain for Sale.—Newcastle, Jan. 1, 1812.

Robert Bewick was by this time 23 years of age, and although lacking the outstanding artistic ability and strength of character of his father, was nevertheless a competent engraver. There does not appear to have been any immediate response to the advertisement for an apprentice, and it was not until 15 August 1812 that the Cash Book records 'W Temple bound to T & R E B'.⁹⁷ William Temple, the son of William Temple and his wife Mary Gill, was baptized at All Saints, Newcastle, on 6 May 1798, and was thus 14 years of age when he started his apprenticeship. Like Harvey, he seems to have shown a particular aptitude for wood engraving, and it was not long before the two apprentices were working on cuts for Bewick's latest project, *The Fables of Aesop*. In his *Memoir* Bewick wrote⁹⁸

In impatiently pushing forward to get to press with the publication, I availed myself of the help of my pupils, (my son, W^m Harvey & W^m Temple) who were also eager to do their utmost to forward me in the engraving business & in my struggles to get the Book ushered into the world.

A third apprentice - mistakenly referred to by Bewick as his last - was taken on in 1813. An entry in the Cash Book dated 24 November 1813 reads 'John Armstrong bound from 1st October. Exps. at Cants - Binding John Armstrong with his Grandfather, Mr Tate, Cant & the pipes & c 13/4. The Bond & Indenture (not paid at this time)'.⁹⁹ Isaac Nicholson left the workshop soon after this to set up in business on his own account, but he continued to undertake work for Bewick and his name appears in the workshop records fairly regularly during the next few years. Newcastle directories show him as a wood and copperplate engraver occupying premises in Moseley Street in the 1820s and in St Nicholas' churchyard later. Bewick wrote of him that he 'was both a good Apprentice & a good Artist - his engravings on Wood are clearly, or honestly cut, as well as being accurately done from his patterns - he did not pursue his business in London, but carries it on in Newcastle'.¹⁰⁰ He died in 1848.

The three apprentices, Harvey, Temple and Armstrong, remained in the workshop with the Bewicks, father and son, for the next four years, during which time further editions of the *Land Birds* and *Water Birds* were published, and work on the *Fables of Aesop* proceeded. John Harrison left the workshop in 1814 and went into lodgings in North Shields, but he continued to work for Bewick until his death on 19 May 1818. The Cash Book includes a payment on 8 June 1818 of 'Cash to Mr Watson of Shields for Jⁿ Harrison's Funeral Expenses £1.13.7'.¹⁰¹ There is in the Pease Collection in Newcastle Library a series of letters from

Bewick to Harrison mostly concerning the writing engraving on metal which was Harrison's speciality, and often critical of his workmanship.¹⁰² In his *Memoir* Bewick wrote 'My nephew John Harrison, was chiefly employed on Writing Engraving—he died of Epileptic Fits... & was buried, at No Shields church, between 2 trees near the footpath'.¹⁰³

Prior to Harrison's death William Harvey had completed his apprenticeship and two new apprentices had started. The first of the new apprentices was Matthew Bewick, another of Bewick's nephews and a younger brother of the William Bewick already employed in the press room. Matthew's indentures are in the Pease Collection,¹⁰⁴ and show that he was bound for seven years on 1 August 1817 (when he was 16 years of age) to learn the 'Art of Copper Plate Printing'. The second apprentice was Alexander Reid, who started in December 1817. Little is known about him, but it seems possible that he was the son of William Reid the Leith bookseller who entertained Bewick and his daughters during their visit to Edinburgh in 1823. In correspondence with a Mr Rodford who had enquired about a possible apprenticeship in 1822 Bewick wrote 'With respect to the youth named in your letter, I will agree to take £50 apprentice fee, his friends to provide him with every thing for the first three years, the 4th year I will give him 6/s, the 5th year 7/s & the 6th & 7th year 8/s per week'.¹⁰⁵ In a follow-up letter he added 'One of my young Men, a native of Scotland, is boarded with a very respectable Family, who find him with Meat & Drink &c for 30 per annum—which I consider moderate as they having no children of their own, pay every attention to his comfort'.¹⁰⁶ The 'native of Scotland' referred to is almost certainly Reid, and that William Reid had a son is confirmed in a letter Bewick wrote to him in 1825 in which he says that he 'shall be glad to find that your son is quite recovered from his accident'.¹⁰⁷

William Harvey completed his apprenticeship at the end of 1816 and left the workshop in the following September. In his *Memoir* Bewick wrote 'The next of my pupils, & one of the first in excellence was William Harvey, who both as an engraver & designer, stands preeminent at this day'.¹⁰⁸ By the time he wrote this Harvey had established himself in London as one of the foremost designers for the wood-engraving trade. Earlier, in a letter to John Bailey dated 5 February 1818, Bewick had written¹⁰⁹

I hope to derive some assistance in the cutting [of] the Fables from a young man [Harvey] who left me last September. As he expressed a wish to continue to work at them for me, I gave him a number of designs with him to London,

which I had, on his acct drawn on wood with a finish and accuracy of fine miniature paintings, and flattered myself that I cou'd put a finishing hand to them when he returned them; but he has sent me none of them back, and I fear that he only intends to make a blaze about the Fables being of his doing, at my expense, in London. These are my conjectures, for I have often been served so before.

Although Harvey is said to have been a favourite pupil, Bewick does not appear to have had much faith in his integrity. Harvey died at Richmond, Surrey, on 13 January 1866, aged 69. A stone tablet in St Nicholas' Cathedral, Newcastle, carved with a palette and engraver's tools, commemorates him as

an artist of great and original talent, who, like his first instructor, Thomas Bewick, enhanced the pictorial interest of works of the press by his skill as a designer and by his development of the resources of wood engraving.

In 1818 the number of apprentices in the workshop was brought back to five with the arrival of Thomas Young, who according to the Cash Book was bound for seven years on 9 June.¹¹⁰ Nothing is known about him other than the little that can be gleaned from the workshop records; these show for example that on 26 March 1820 fifteen shillings was 'Paid for clothes of late Geo Gray which present to Thos Young',¹¹¹ and that on 16 April 1821 Young was paid five shillings for 'working Sunday upon Aldⁿ Forsters Cof. Plate'.¹¹² In the meantime William Temple, who had shown considerable skill when working alongside Harvey and Robert Bewick on the *Fables of Aesop*, had completed his apprenticeship on 14 August 1819 and given up wood engraving to go into the family business. In his *Memoir* Bewick wrote 'His [Harvey's] fellow Apprentice was William Temple (who left off Wood engraving, & commenced linnen Draper in Newcastle), he was a faithfull copyest, & his pieces were honestly or clearly cut'.¹¹³

In his book *Thomas Bewick: his Life and Times* Robert Robinson tells how Bewick 'frequently began work at six o'clock in the morning, and continued until nine at night'.¹¹⁴ He goes on to say that whilst at work Bewick never used a lamp, but 'by the light of two candles with double wicks... could see to execute the most delicate and minute objects'. When one considers the fine detail of the wood-cuts one can only marvel at his eyesight. Some improvement in the illumination of the workshop appears to have taken place in the autumn of 1819, when the Cash Book records the expenditure of sixpence on 13 October on 'Drinks to Men laying Gas Pipes' and of three shillings on 30 November on 'Gas Lights 4 weeks'.¹¹⁵

1819–1828: The Final Years

The departure of William Temple in August 1819 left four apprentices in the workshop – John Armstrong, Matthew Bewick, Alexander Reid and Thomas Young – but it was about this time that they were joined by John Jackson. Jackson was born on 19 April 1801 and baptized at Ovingham on 23 August, the son of John Jackson and his wife Mary Mason. He had been apprenticed to Armstrong and Walker of Dean Street, Newcastle (Armstrong being the George Armstrong who had served part of his time under Bewick), but on the failure of their business it was arranged that he should complete his apprenticeship under Bewick. Although his name does not appear in the workshop records until 26 April 1823, when he was paid eight shillings, and a Cash Book entry dated 19 June 1823 reads 'Paid Mr Wilson for Jackson's Indentures £1.10.6',¹¹⁶ it appears from a draft letter written by Bewick to Jackson's guardian that he had actually started four years earlier.¹¹⁷

John Armstrong completed his apprenticeship on 30 September 1820, but remained on the payroll, and the next change was the arrival of Ebenezer Landells at the end of 1822. The *Dictionary of National Biography* states that Landells, who later gained fame as the first editor of *Punch*, served a seven-year apprenticeship under Bewick, and this seems to be confirmed by a note in the Bewick family's personal accounts referring to '5/- for Landell's Indenture'.¹¹⁸ There is some doubt as to whether he actually worked under Bewick for any length of time, and there are no further references to him in the workshop records. Possibly there was a disagreement about the terms of the apprenticeship; in any case Landells is said to have served most of his time under Bewick's former pupil Isaac Nicholson, who had by this time established his own business in St Nicholas' churchyard, until in 1829 he left for London.

John Jackson remained in the workshop until June 1824, when a note in the Cash Book records 'Jackson gone to London'.¹¹⁹ It is said that following a disagreement with Bewick Jackson left before the expiration of his indentures, and that Bewick cancelled the indentures by cutting his own and his son's name from them. In London Jackson worked with Harvey on Northcote's *Fables*, and soon came to be regarded as the best engraver in London. His name is chiefly associated with *A Treatise on Wood Engraving*, in which he collaborated with W A Chatto. In this work, and in spite of any bad feeling that existed between them, Jackson pays generous tribute to the skill and artistry of his former master. Bewick

however makes no mention of Jackson in his *Memoir*. Jackson died in London on 27 March 1848, aged 47.

Presumably Matthew Bewick was out of his time on 1 August 1824, although his name only appears infrequently in the workshop records. It is possible that he suffered ill health – he died on 4 July 1832 when only 31 years of age – but he was still receiving occasional but irregular payments until 1827. It was also in August 1824 that James Reevely, later to become an accomplished wood engraver and Robert Bewick's right-hand man, came to the workshop as an apprentice.¹²⁰ He and Thomas Young were the only remaining apprentices when Alexander Reid left in December 1824 at the end of his seven-year term. John Armstrong however was still in the workshop until he finally set off for London in October 1825 – in his *Memoir* Bewick refers to Armstrong as his 'last apprentice... who is now pursuing his business in London'.¹²¹ Being then 72 years of age, Bewick presumably regarded the later apprentices as Robert's responsibility rather than his own.

Thomas Young had completed his apprenticeship in June 1825, but he stayed on for two more years. He is not mentioned by Bewick, and nothing is known of his subsequent career. The only other apprentice to be taken on in Bewick's lifetime was William Hardy, who started on 1 December 1827, and went on to complete his apprenticeship under Robert.

Conclusion

It is not generally realised how many men were employed in the workshop. Over the whole period from 1777, when Bewick went into partnership with Beilby, until his death in 1828, the number of apprentices employed at any one time averaged more than 3½. Except for the 15 years from 1797, when the partnership with Beilby was dissolved, to 1812, when Robert joined his father, there were also two partners in the business, and for most of the time there were two or more press men. When these are included, the average number of men in the workshop totals more than seven, and in the peak period around 1806 the number rose to at least ten.

It is unfortunate that the workshop records and Bewick's own account in his *Memoir* do not throw more light on the specific tasks on which the apprentices were engaged. Men like John Johnson and John Armstrong who stayed on for several years after completing their apprenticeships must have been involved in a wide variety of jobs – and presumably

carried them out to Bewick's satisfaction –but little information about them has been found. There is still a mass of material awaiting further study, and more evidence regarding the work of the apprentices may yet be found.



J. Johnson, del.

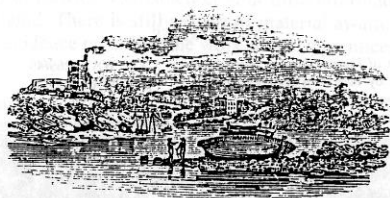
T. Bewick, sculp.

THE
HERMIT AT HIS MORNING DEVOTION.

Published January 1, 1804, by William Bulmer, at the Shakspeare Printing Office,
Cleveland Row.

NOTES

1. *A Memoir of Thomas Bewick written by himself* Edited by Iain Bain (London, 1975) [hereafter *Memoir*] p 79
2. Public Record Office [hereafter PRO] IRI 58/202
3. PRO IRI 60/120
4. *Memoir* p 40
5. Pease Collection, Newcastle City Library, [hereafter Pease Coll] Ref 172 (Vol 1) p 19
6. Tyne and Wear Archives Service [hereafter TWAS] 1269/1
7. TWAS 1269/1
8. Hack MS (quoted by Iain Bain in *Memoir* p 237)
9. TWAS 1269/1
10. PRO IRI 64/164
11. *Memoir* p 79
12. *Memoir* p 79
13. *Memoir* p 195
14. *Memoir* p 195
15. *Memoir* p 196
16. *Memoir* p 196
17. Robert Robinson, *Thomas Bewick: His Life and Times* (Newcastle, 1887) p 248
18. TWAS 1269/2
19. TWAS 1269/2
20. TWAS 1269/59
21. Hack MS (reproduced by Iain Bain in *A Checklist of the Manuscripts of Thomas Bewick* (Pinner, 1970) plate 5) Jacob Rile was apprenticed to Langlands and Robertson, silversmiths, in 1779
22. TWAS 1269/2
23. TWAS 1269/2
24. Hodgson's Pedigrees Ref C 398 (Newcastle City Library)
25. Unidentified newspaper cutting (c June 1884) in Newcastle City Library
26. Pease Coll Ref 175 p 72
27. TWAS 1269/3
28. TWAS 1269/2
29. TWAS 1269/2
30. TWAS 1269/2
31. TWAS 1269/3
32. TWAS 1269/49
33. TWAS 1269/49
34. TWAS 1269/3
35. Loose slip in workshop papers, quoted by Iain Bain in *The Watercolours and Drawings of Thomas Bewick* (London, 1981), Vol 1, p 61
36. TWAS 1289/3
37. TWAS 1269/3
38. TWAS 1269/3
39. TWAS 1269/3
40. *Memoir* p 197
41. *Memoir* p 78
42. TWAS NCX/CT3/1/5
43. TWAS 1269/4
44. W A Chatto & John Jackson, *A Treatise on Wood Engraving* (London, 1839) p 610n
45. Pease Coll Ref 371 p 183 – an unsigned note, possibly by Charlton Nesbit
46. TWAS 1269/3
47. TWAS 1269/50
48. Montague Weekley, *Thomas Bewick* (Oxford, 1953) p 144
49. TWAS 1269/3
50. TWAS 1269/3
51. *Memoir* p 248
52. TWAS 1269/3
53. TWAS 1269/4
54. TWAS 1269/4
55. *Memoir* p 199
56. 1851 Census (H0107/2408, folio 355)
57. TWAS 1269/50
58. TWAS 1269/50
59. TWAS 1269/50
60. TWAS 1269/50
61. TWAS 1269/50
62. TWAS 1269/50
63. TWAS 1269/5
64. TWAS 1269/5
65. Pease Coll Ref 172 (Vol 1) p 9
66. TWAS 1269/50
67. Pease Coll Ref 171
68. TWAS 1269/52
69. TWAS 1269/5
70. TWAS 1269/5
71. TWAS 1269/5



River scene, possibly near Wylam, engraved by Luke Clennell, from *British Birds* (1826) vo; 2, p140

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| 72. <i>Memoir</i> p 200 | 97. TWAS 1269/6 |
| 73. MS, London Library | 98. <i>Memoir</i> p 132 |
| 74. TWAS 1269/5 | 99. TWAS 1269/6 |
| 75. TWAS 1269/5 | 100. <i>Memoir</i> p 200 |
| 76. TWAS 1269/5 | 101. TWAS 1269/7 |
| 77. <i>Memoir</i> p 199 | 102. Pease Coll Ref 371 p 120sq |
| 78. Pease Coll Ref 371 p 118 | 103. <i>Memoir</i> p 199 |
| 79. TWAS 1269/6 | 104. Pease Coll Ref 371 p 117 |
| 80. Weekly Engraving Book for 1802-5, V & A Museum | 105. Correspondence in Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle |
| 81. TWAS 1269/51 | 106. Correspondence in Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle |
| 82. Marshall Hall, <i>Artists of Northumbria</i> (Newcastle, 1973) | 107. Correspondence in Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle |
| 83. TWAS 1269/51 | 108. <i>Memoir</i> p 200 |
| 84. <i>Memoir</i> p 199 | 109. Julia Boyd, <i>Bewick Gleanings</i> (Newcastle, 1886) p 65 |
| 85. TWAS 1269/77 | 110. TWAS 1269/7 |
| 86. TWAS 1269/6 | 111. TWAS 1269/7 |
| 87. TWAS 1269/6 | 112. TWAS 1269/8 |
| 88. <i>Newcastle Courant</i> , 19 February 1813: 'Died - The 19th inst. in London aged 25 Mrs Willis, wife of Mr Edward Willis, late of this town, engraver.' | 113. <i>Memoir</i> p 200 |
| 89. TWAS 1269/53 | 114. Robinson, <i>Thomas Bewick</i> p 194 |
| 90. <i>Memoir</i> p 199 | 115. TWAS 1269/7 |
| 91. Weekly Engraving Book for 1815-19, V & A Museum | 116. TWAS 1269/8 |
| 92. TWAS 1269/52 | 117. Draft letters dated 1819 from Bewick to Mr Laws, Prudhoe Castle, quoted by Iain Bain in <i>Watercolours and Drawings</i> |
| 93. TWAS 1269/6 | 118. TWAS 1269/253 |
| 94. TWAS 1269/77 | 119. TWAS 1269/8 |
| 95. TWAS 1269/52 | 120. TWAS 1269/8 |
| 96. TWAS 1269/52 | 121. <i>Memoir</i> p 200 |

ILLUSTRATIONS

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The engraving of the Hermit at his Morning Devotion, on p 40, is reproduced from *Poems of Goldsmith and Parnell* (2nd edn, London, 1804), facing p 67. This work was printed by William Bulmer, a fine printer in London who had been an apprentice in Newcastle upon Tyne at the same time as Thomas Bewick. As indicated the design was by John Johnson.

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Farm scene engraved by William Temple, from *British Birds*
(6th edn, 1826), vol 1, p 311



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